

REAL ESTATE

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Hot Property



FRANCIS M. HARVEY/GETTY IMAGES
MOVING ON: Rob Lowe plans a new Montecito estate.

A west wing of his very own

By RUTH BYRON
Times Staff Writer

Actor Rob Lowe and his wife, Siberyl, have purchased a temporary home in Montecito for \$6 million and are in escrow to buy, for \$7 million, 3.4 acres nearby, where they plan to build an estate, local real estate sources said last week.

The couple, who have lived in the area for years, are also in escrow to sell their longtime home there for an estimated \$25 million. The buyers were identified as Peter Sperling, son of the founder of the Arizona-based University of Phoenix, and his wife, Stephanie. In addition, the Sperlings just closed escrow on an oceanfront home with a seven-car garage in Montecito for about \$27.5 million.

The Lowes' longtime home was featured on the cover of the July 2001 issue of *Architectural Digest*. It was decorated by Laila Arvin of Santa Monica, whose celebrity clients also include Wayne Gretzky, Courtney Thorne-Smith and Sugar Ray Leonard.

The house, built in the 1960s, has seven bedrooms and 7½ bathrooms and includes a guesthouse, pool, pool house and butler's pantry. The 5.6-acre site has ocean and mountain views.

The Lowes' temporary home has six bedrooms and six bathrooms, including a guesthouse, plus a detached cabana with exercise and media rooms. The house, built in the '70s and recently refurbished, is on 1.2 acres with a pool and mountain views.

The land where the Lowes intend to build has ocean and mountain views. The site is renowned for its privacy. The property comes with building plans.

Lowe, 41, played Sam Seaborn, deputy communications director for the president (Martin Sheen) on the NBC drama "The West Wing." Lowe decided to leave the show in 2002 due to

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SEEKING NEW HOMES: Remodelers Kim and Rene Jarboe have purchased materials from the San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity in Pasadena.

Photographs by GARY FRIEDMAN FOR LOS ANGELES TIMES

The second time around

Savvy remodelers are saving money and gaining a vintage look by reusing salvaged items — doorknobs, tile, wood and more.

By GUYCE GREEN
Special to The Times

RENE SPENCER was tooling around her neighborhood one day a couple of years ago when the sight of a home demolition stopped her in her tracks. The Long Beach resident had just purchased a Craftsman home built in the 1920s and wanted authentic materials for an extensive renovation the house required.

With the contractor's permission, she retrieved door trim and a stove that would have been destined for the dump.

"I just happened to be driving by," said Spencer, whose resourcefulness has yielded reclaimed lighting fixtures, ceiling fans, doorknobs, a picket fence and even a ladder for her attic.

In recent years, remodelers have found an increasing supply of recycled building materials [See Recycling, Page K3]



GOOD BUYS: The Jarboes check the file aisle at the Habitat for Humanity store, where they saved "a ton" on kitchen cabinets. "There are a lot of treasure finds there if you know what you're looking for," Rene says.

Spying deals, even treasures, among used materials

[Recycling, from Page K1] available. The state's Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, considered landmark legislation in the nation's recycling movement, mandated that cities reduce the amount of waste going to landfills by 80% in 2000. With the statewide recycling push and dwindling space in landfills, home builders such as Keith Brown, owner of K.B. Construction Co. in Monrovia, have felt increasing financial pressure to recycle construction materials.

"We find the costs at the dump are much more expensive now due to the lack of landfills," he said.

Consequently, Brown has turned to organizations that accept donations of building materials, both new and used, such as the San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity Builders' Surplus Store in Pasadena, where he previously was a board member. Habitat provides a list of its Southern California stores on its website at www.habitat.org.

"We probably save \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year in dump fees," Brown said, "and we give the materials to a good cause, so it's a win-win situation."

Spencer's recyclable sources include organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, tips from friends and Craigslist at www.craigslist.com, a website where consumers or companies can advertise the availability of or need for goods. She also has continued to prove her neighborhood.

"I had to repair holes in the walls, so I went around and found other houses where they were doing remodels," Spencer said. "The house was a total fixer; it needed everything."

Spencer estimated that she saved roughly \$5,000 on materials by using other nonwaste reclaimed materials, such as interior doors, lumber, fixtures, paint, tile and landscaping.

Interior Design resident Rene Jarboe was at the point where she would have given almost anything to upgrade her kitchen, which has remained in "pretty ugly" condition for the last two years while she and her husband, Edm., focused on the rest of the home they and their two children live in. Now, thanks to recycled cabinets from the San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity store, the couple's kitchen will soon take shape.

"I've waited patiently, and now that the cabinets have come in, we're going to start ripping the kitchen apart," Jarboe said.

The Jarboes, both 41, saved more money than they originally realized by purchasing the cabinets, which were used, from the Habitat store instead of a retail outlet.

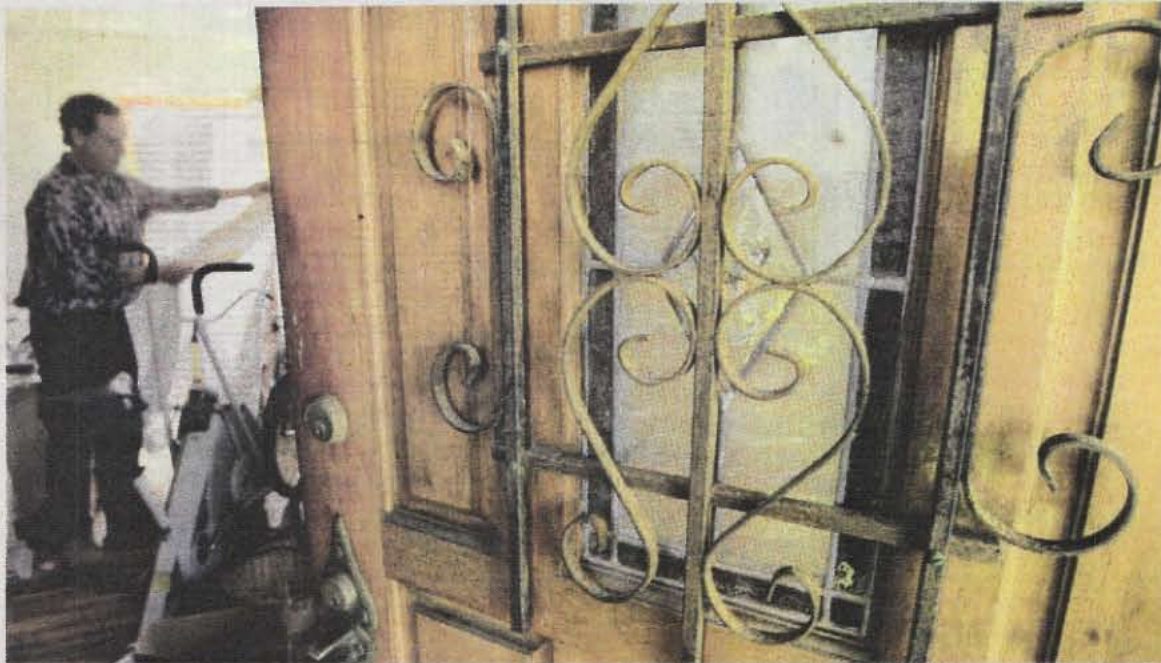
"We made a mistake in some measuring, and the sink base we have wouldn't fit. When we looked into getting another base, we learned the cabinets are worth thousands of dollars," she said. "The pantry alone, if we were to reorder it, would be \$1,000, and we got everything for a little more than \$1,000, so we saved a ton of money."

But recycled materials don't always yield huge savings.

"I tried to save money and get most of my stuff for free, but there was no free," said West Los Angeles resident Scott Hill, an environmental consultant who has purchased and sold salvaged materials online.

Hill is using a number of salvaged materials to add a room and a second floor to his home. "With the demolition, the de-nailing, de-painting, stacking, loading and hauling of materials, there are expenses," he said.

Labor can be a significant one. But the fact that Kim Jarboe is a carpenter helped the couple save money. "Our last home was a fixer-upper too, and



OPENING OLD DOORS: Scott Hill buys and sells salvaged materials and is using recycled pieces, such as this door, in his West Los Angeles home addition. Photographs by RICARDO DEBARANZA/Los Angeles Times

The Web search

There are many sources of recyclable building materials, and each operates differently. Here are a few of them:

- www.habitat.org
- www.craigslist.com
- www.freecycle.com
- www.recycler.com
- www.enumb.ca.gov/CalMAM

he redid the whole thing himself, using a number of recycled products," Rene Jarboe said.

Whether a homeowner is a carpenter or not, she said, one trick to finding the right recycled materials is doing your homework before going to the Habitat store: "There are a lot of treasure finds there if you know what you're looking for. To the average person, it might look like a bunch of old stuff sitting around, but if you have an eye for it, if you measure and know what you need, you can make it work."

David Berman had "environmental consciousness" in mind when he tried to give away materials from his Rancho Palms Verdes townhouse a couple of years ago.

"I wanted some of the materials to go to good use," he said.

"My demolition guy arranged for some of the materials to get taken away. But we found trying to recycle materials a major headache," said Berman, a 45-year-old physician. "It would have been easier to just have them dump it in the trash."

Berman cautioned well-meaning homeowners to be on the lookout for companies that don't follow up on their promise to recycle.

"I spent a lot of time trying to find someone who would take [my materials] and then making sure they were really going to recycle them," he said.

Hill agreed it was important to find a reputable contractor who would bring materials to a site that accepted recyclables or that was a professional deconstruction business. "Whether a deconstruction business wants to take the time to take the project apart piece by piece to reuse it depends on the quality of the materials. Lumber is scarce and



SAVED: Some of Hill's rescues: a wooden floor of reclaimed maple from the 1920s and tiles from a Palms Verdes home.

to deconstruct a building or home a contractor needs room to separate items."

He too has experienced difficulty getting rid of used items.

"I have been trying to sell 1920s flooring and 1940s and '50s doors for a couple months, but no one has come to see them. Like anything, it can be hard to sell used building materials. People say they are interested and ask you to hold it for them but never show up or call again," said Hill, who's on the lookout himself for materials, including panel doors, granite slabs or pieces and cast-light trim kits.

"As home deconstruction and

recycling becomes more mainstream, it will become much easier and cheaper," said Hill. "Meanwhile, people need to take time and ask lots of questions."

Spencer agreed that thoroughness is required when choosing recycled materials: "You have to take your time, be selective and not take the first thing that comes along."

The Jarboes have the lesson down pat.

"Using recycled materials," Rene Jarboe said, "has probably become a way of life for us."

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It takes an open mind and the right tools

When it comes to selecting recycled materials, it's important for people to be flexible in terms of what they hope to create, said Scott Hill, who collects and resells salvaged materials as well as uses them in his own West L.A. home addition.

"What can you do with this old lamp, that kind of wood or this stone? What will it look like after you sand or clean it?" he said.

"You have to be open about what materials or type of wood you are going to use. You have to adapt to circumstances."

Hill brings sandpaper and a scraping tool with him in his searches to "see what's under the paint," he said. "Some wood that may have been covered with paint years ago may now be a beautiful, valuable hardwood."

The right tools are critical when gathering materials such as old fences that might be used for an interior wall or an aged redwood deck that will need

to be planed and sanded for use.

"There are old tools that do better than the claws at the end of a hammer or a crowbar would look for an old-time store that sells used tools," said Hill.

"Those special woodwork or demo tools can save you a lot of time and damage to your wood. This goes for old tile, stone and marble items."

And take your time to avoid breakage, he emphasized, especially if the items with which you are working are special: "They might be irreplaceable."

When scouring for recycled materials, place as many ads online or in newspapers as possible.

"And talk to all your friends," Hill said. "Look at dumpsters everywhere and talk to contractors."

For more information, Hill can be reached at scotthillforest@yahoo.com.

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